

has been an important part of the moral fabric of Southwest Louisiana for 100 years and I am confident Pleasant Green Baptist Church will continue to be a valuable community member for many years to come.

Today I want to recognize and congratulate the church and its congregation, for reaching this historic milestone.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 739, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SMALL BUSINESS DAY IN COURT ACT OF 2005; H.R. 740, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION EFFICIENCY ACT OF 2005; H.R. 741, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF OSHA CITATIONS ACT OF 2005; H.R. 742, OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH SMALL EMPLOYER ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT OF 2005

SPEECH OF

**HON. BETTY MCCOLLUM**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, July 12, 2005*

Ms. MCCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to H.R. 739, H.R. 740, H.R. 741, and H.R. 742.

Today, America's workers need the protections provided under the Occupational Safety and Health Act more than ever. Each year, 6,000 workers die in workplace-related accidents, and 50,000–60,000 people die from illnesses caused by their jobs. The protections in OSHA ensure what our Nation's workforce has fought for and deserves—a safe and healthy workplace.

Instead of strengthening these worker protections, the bills before us today are an attack on the very intent of these important safeguards.

The first bill, H.R. 739, excuses employers that fail to respond to OSHA citations within the 15-day deadline. The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC) already has the authority to review missed deadlines on a case-by-case basis. This change removes the incentive for employers to quickly respond to hazards. Meanwhile, the safety and health of workers hang in the balance.

H.R. 740 seeks to expand OSHRC to five members and require that all members be

lawyers. Since the Commission was established in 1970, it has been composed of three members and has benefited from the expertise of those not holding law degrees. This change inaccurately reflects the workload and responsibilities of OSHRC and unfairly excludes the contributions of members with strong backgrounds in safety and health.

H.R. 741 transfers the authority to bring cases to the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court from the Secretary of Labor to OSHRC. This modification overturns a 1991 Supreme Court decision and undermines the Secretary's responsibility to enforce OSHA policies.

The biggest blow delivered by H.R. 742 requires OSHA to pay attorney's fees for every case it does not win, regardless of why the case lost or how well-justified it was. This places the burden of these cases squarely on the taxpayer and leaves America's workforce more vulnerable than ever.

The substitute amendment offered by Congressman GEORGE MILLER to raise the minimum wage has my full support. It is unacceptable that employees working 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year, for minimum wage earn only \$10,700 a year—\$3,400 below the poverty line for a family of three. American full-time, full-year workers should not be forced to raise their families in poverty. It is unfortunate that this amendment was not made in order by the Republican leadership, as this raise would have benefited over 11 million American workers and their families.

The hard-working men and women of this country deserve to be protected and safe in the workplace, Mr. Speaker. That is why I urge my colleagues to vote against these ill-conceived bills.

TRIBUTE TO BEN BALL OF MOREHEAD CITY, NORTH CAROLINA

**HON. WALTER B. JONES**

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, July 20, 2005*

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in sadness to note the recent passing of a dear friend and great American, Ben Ball of Morehead City, North Carolina.

Born on October 14, 1956, Ben died too soon at the age of 48. Yet in those 48 years, he led a remarkable life.

After attending Wake Forest University, Ben went on to graduate from East Carolina Uni-

versity and then began a successful 25-year career in the real estate business. He was a member of the Carteret County Association of Realtors where he was named Realtor of the Year in 1981, 1992, and in 2002. The North Carolina Association of Realtors named him State Realtor of the Year in 2003, and he served as President of the North Carolina Association in 1992. From 1991 through this year he served as a State Director of the North Carolina Association of Realtors, and was active in the governmental and political process both in Raleigh and in Washington, DC.

In addition to his professional activities, Ben was a pillar of his community. He was a lifetime member of First United Methodist Church in Morehead City, NC. He was a past President of the Rotary Club of Morehead City, and in 1997 was named Rotarian of the Year. Additionally, he had served for 5 years as Sponsorship Chairman of the Crystal Coast Habitat for Humanity Golf Tournament, served as Past President of the Carteret County Division of the American Heart Association, Past President of the Morehead City Planning Board, and as Past Chairman of the Carteret County Republican Party. Further, he was a volunteer at West Carteret High School, and assisted "Toys for Tots" for the past 5 years to help secure over 500 bicycles for local needy children.

Mr. Speaker, I first met Ben many years ago, and knew him as a friend ever since. While Ben was prominent in the community, most importantly—like everyone else who first became acquainted with him through politics, or business, or through community activities—I came to know him not as a political friend, but just as a friend. Period.

He was unfailing supportive, uplifting, and caring toward the many people in his life. His being here on this earth made a difference in ways that we all know, and—I am positive—in countless ways that we will never know.

In times such as this, there are no words that can fill the void in the hearts of his friends and loved ones. While he is now in the loving arms of God, we who are still here miss him.

Ben is survived by his wife, Debbie Carpenter Ball, by his sister Anne Roberts Ball, and by his daughters Debra Kreth Ball and Laura Ryan Ball. They are all in my thoughts and prayers.